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INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 0025
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0209
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0025
RUEHLC/AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE 0915
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON 0761
RUEHLU/AMEMBASSY LUANDA 0394
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 0132
RUEHTO/AMEMBASSY MAPUTO 0429
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 0020

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAKAR 002609

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/30/2016
TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [PU](#)
SUBJECT: GUINEA BISSAU: RECORD DRUG CASE COLLAPSES

Classified By: Ambassador Janice L. Jacobs for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

1. (C) A Bissau-Guinean judge released prisoners who were being held in connection with the country's largest drug seizure. A DEA Agent traveled to Bissau to assist with the investigation and prosecution and was met with resistance despite GOGB's earlier pleas for assistance. High-level involvement bodes ill for the donor's conference and future stability. END SUMMARY.

THE RUNAROUND

2. (C) Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) Lagos Agent Lawrence Alexander visited Bissau Oct. 12-17 to assist the Government in prosecuting the largest drug seizure in Guinea-Bissau's history, 674 kg. of cocaine, with an estimated street value of approximately USD 25 million. This was the third trip by a DEA Agent this year in response to President Joao Bernardo &Nino8 Vieira's official request for U.S. assistance in fighting drug trafficking. Unfortunately, Alexander was given the runaround by the Prime Minister, Justice Minister, police and courts. He was never permitted to view the drugs, interview the two Latin American detainees, or gain assurances the cocaine would be destroyed. The two prisoners of undetermined Latin American origin -- per press reports either Colombians or Venezuelans using the aliases Juan Carlos Teran Figueran and Pedro Marino Vega -- were eventually released by order of Regional Tribunal judge Dr. Gabriel Madjanhe on Oct. 13.

3. (C) Justice Minister Namuano Dias Gomes told Alexander that a diplomatic note was required for him to assist in the investigation. Embassy provided a note on Oct. 16, but it was not enough to break the impasse. As of Oct. 30 the GOGB has not officially responded to our note despite repeated requests to the Justice Minister to do so.

NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED

4. (C) In an Oct. 23-25 trip to Bissau, LEGATT, RSO and PolOff met with chief of the Judicial Police Orlando de Silva, who orchestrated the big seizure and has primary responsibility for all narcotics crimes in the country. De

Silva said he was informed last week by the Justice Minister that his investigative staff would be slashed from 55 down to ¶35. The official reason for the layoffs, according to what de Silva was told, is civil service downsizing for an International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan. However, Catherine McAuliffe, Deputy Division Chief of the IMF mission visiting Bissau at the time said the first phase of the restructuring plan included no police or military and was fully drawn up by the GOGB.

¶5. (C) De Silva told Alexander that the chief of the Navy, Captain Bubo Na Tchuto, went to the Judicial Police after the arrest and said if his name was linked to the cocaine seizure people would start dying.

COMMENT

¶6. (C) With the suspects released, this case will almost surely not be prosecuted. Indications are some or all of the seized cocaine has disappeared from police custody. While the GOGB has been making public efforts to show the international community it is worthy of major investment before the November 7-8 donor,s meeting in Geneva, this failure will seriously undermine its work. The involvement of high-level government and military officials and the significant sums of money available to them in this case are the first hard evidence that Guinea-Bissau has begun to degenerate into a narco-state. END COMMENT.

JACOBS